10: d'Orleans--268 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 609, 727, 177.72 Siam
636.72

"At first they refuse to let us have any provisions, and as we are now without food I am reduced to extreme measures. The villagers assert that they have neither fowls nor eggs in the place.

'If you do not rear poultry,' I reply, 'we may consider that all we find are wild birds,' and I tell the interpreter to open a hen-house and take out two chickens, offering fifteen pence for them, which is, of course, accepted. When the owners have once examined the coins, sounded them and found them good, they regain confidence and bring us some eggs. Their distrust arises from the proceedings of the Siamese soldiers, who, as they travel, requisition everything they require without any payment; the villagers thought that we might do the same, but now they realize that we are honest people."

10: d'Orleans--275 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 609, 764

"In the evening some natives come and beg us not to enter the village near which we have halted, for a man has died there, and the funeral is being celebrated by a great feast, at which a good deal of tchoum tchoum will be drunk; our presence would be a constraint upon the guests."

10: d'Orleans--305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 147, 157, 463, 563, 609 Ethnic subgroups

"The Kas of Luang Prabang appear to be very shy, and I could not induce them, even by the promise of presents, to let me photograph them, the only means by which I succeeded being an order from the Siamese Colonel, while, when brought up, they were so intimidated that I could count their pulses beating at more than eighty to the minute. When walking in the streets they proceed as if they were afraid that some one was going to hurt them, and, being more laborious if less educated than the Laotians, they are employed by the latter to fashion the metals, to look after the stock and to cultivate the soil, so that they fill much the same part that the Lacædemonians of old did, except that they are not so badly used."

10: d'Orleans--315 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 181, 517, 609

"... They are a curious people; lazy without being fools; of equal fortune, as a rule, without great wealth or great distress; of a fairly pacific character; well disposed towards foreigners without exhibiting the intolerable curiosity of the Chinese; very religious, more, perhaps, from habit than from strong convictions; and, what is so rare in the East, treating women and girls with deference. For, while very free in their morals, they have their serenades and their 'Courts of Love,' reviving in the midst of Indo-China practices which belong rather to the Europe of the Middle Ages. There is something poetical, chivalrous and French, or, to go back to an earlier period, something Athenian in the inhabitants of the Laos; and if they have not the artistic feeling of the Greek, they have no desire for a knowledge of luxury. Having very little to earn, they do not work much and their existence is more unfettered."

10: d'Orleans--321-322 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 153, 609, 793, 871

"At first, we received several visits from an aged bonze, also occupying an important position, who had been for many years friendly to the French. 'They are fathers and brothers to me,' he would say. During the second half of our visit, he had been [322] seized with a wasting illness, and we frequently went to see him. One of the interpreters of the Consulate was teaching his pupils French, and they struck me as being very intelligent, while their lessons were well done."

10: d'Orleans--379 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 554, 609

"The natives here seem very peaceful, and we get on very well with them. We are looked upon as important personages, or we should not be admitted into the sala where we pass the night and which bears the following inscription:--'Reserved for great men and mandarins.'"

"Higher up there were two or three villages that seemed to have inhabitants of both sexes and all ages, some of whom we now and then met making their way along the winding, perpetually climbing road. The sound of our horn drove them mad. The more fearful tried their best to climb the sheer earth or rock wall of the blasted mountain-slide; the others, as if imploring us to be merciful and realize that they would run away if they could, snatched themselves bare-headed and, placing their hats against their stomachs, tried to break their spines in kowtowing to me as they might to a long dead emperor suddenly returned to earth. A few, less obsequious, or less quick-witted, watched us pass with open mouths and stupefied expressions, bawling children scurrying in and out between their legs. Near the top of the climb there suddenly appeared horses and other pack-animals, and the panic we created among these unusual carriers in Indo-China could not easily be described. We passed not a [265] few traveling pigs along the way too, for wherever there is Chinese culture there must also be pork. Though they are credited with infinite patience, the Chinese will not drive pigs to market. But the Annamese, more afraid of work perhaps, rather than more patient, usually try to, with a cord tied to each porker's leg. This may possibly be easier than the Chinese way of bodily carrying them, two on a one-man shoulder-pole or one between two men, so that carrier and carried, bound to market in this undignified manner, seem fellows in misery. In Hanoi and the larger towns of Annam this more certain form of transportation may also now and then be seen. But the Annamese pig is ordinarily

driven, which is hard on motorists. For most of the pigs we met were too strong for the holder, and yet not quite strong enough to get away entirely and dash themselves over the mountain-side. Therefore, as they seemed bent on suicide in any form--and who could blame them?--the car always had to wait while the would-be pig-driver and several of his fellows united in one mighty tug of war that dragged the squealing animal out from under our wheels. For the most foolhardy of Annamese chauffeurs, however disdainful of the pig-driving populace, would scarcely have risked running over one of these porcine obstructions on this pathway along the bottomless pit."

23: Franck--280 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"In Xieng Khuang there stands a monument to six Frenchmen, five of them killed in France during the war, and one, like the dozen native soldiers whose names also appear on it, tué par les Méos rebelles. It seems there was a great Miao uprising in the Laos during the winter of 1918-19, the bloodiest battle of which took place at Nong-het, between the 'rebels' and the French, more exactly the native soldiers of the French. It was no surprise to be told that German agents and money had fomented the rebellion, though saner French residents admit that the Miao had long wished to be ruled by their own rather than by Laosian chieftains. That was no unnatural demand, and by the terms of the peace now reigning between them and the French it has been granted. Nor does this change seem to put any great burden upon Miao justice, for in cases involving more than five piastres the contestants may appeal to the French authorities, whom they evidently trust more than they do their own chieftains. The end of the rebellion was typical of these stiff-necked mountaineers. The French issued an ultimatum that the Méo must submit by 9 p.m. on a certain day; and at 8:59 exactly, while the French commanders sat with their watches in their hands, the Miao chieftain strode in and capitulated. The puzzle still remains how a race without clocks managed to time themselves so dramatically. Now they seem quite friendly, though it is not they who put their palms together above their heads and come to the squat when a white man goes by."

23; Franck--332 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 511, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"The Kha villages I saw were the lowest type of human dwelling; filth and stupidity seemed to be the prevailing characteristics. All our romantic yarns about the simple life of savages leave us with the false impression that they are hardier than civilized people, and the writers rarely mention the dirty, the truly animal conditions in which they live. The Kha are as innocent of any idea of cleanliness as the lowest class of Chinese, in great contrast to the Tai about them, and it is not strange that they have more smallpox than the rest of the population. Some were so timid that I had to drive them out of their reed and grass huts into the light necessary for photography, just as one might drive some wild animal out of its warm but dirty lair, so timid that I had to manhandle a group of both sexes that came along the trail one day, ~~before they~~ gave up their temptation to run away without posing for my dreaded camera."

23: Franck--334 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 211, 609, 771 Ethnic subgroup

"In contrast to China, the only visible evidences of religious belief in these wilder parts of Luang Prabang kingdom are bamboo arrows and bits of woven wicker squares and the like, beside the trail here and there. These, the prince told me, were warnings, either that a trap of arrows had been set for wild animals somewhere on the path leading off into the brousse, or that a Kha village was engaged in formalities to which strangers were not invited. Docile as they are, the Kha have been known to kill even Frenchmen who have overlooked or persisted in disobeying these warnings. Hence little is known of the religion of this primitive tribe, except that it acknowledges innumerable genii, good and bad, and that there are many things the visitor must not do, many things taboo not only for the Kha themselves but for any one who enters their villages, because to do them would be to stir up the evil spirits to wreak vengeance on the villagers themselves."

23: Franck--336
116, 576, 622, 609

T-2

(1924) 1926

Laotians
Ethnic subgroup

"Village chiefs bent low before the emissary of the king, putting their hands on their knees, for evidently this prince was not close enough to royalty to be worthy of the complete squat; or the people here may have been more independent. In turn the head-man of a village is a real boss-provided he has a very commanding way. This one of Ban-namon, otherwise known as Muong Kassy--ban seems to mean town, and a muong is a division something like the commune of France--did not have much head-man personality, or he had less respect or fear for princely orders than his attitude suggested; so that when I went for my daily conversation with my family I had also to wire back to the commissaire and insist on fresh horses, for none had been provided, the strict orders of the king and the French notwithstanding."

23: Franck--337 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 609 Ethnic subgroup

"The Kha should have been most weary of us all, but they crawled obsequiously in on their hands and knees to bring me water in a section of bamboo or to hand me anything I asked or the prince sent them for."

23: Franck--342 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 609

"The half-naked women had little objection to posing for their pictures, though they were fully as modest as their sisters anywhere else. Some of them would not have commanded princessly salaries in a New York extravaganza, unless they could have worn masks; others were distinctly attractive even in features."

23: Franck--344-345 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 461, 609

"On the other hand these naïve jungle-dwellers do not lack physical fear. They crouched at the trail-side raising palmed hands to me; in the more settled districts farther south long rows of them crowded against the wall of the mountain road, even turning their faces away, as if fearing a blow, which seemed to speak badly for their rulers, whether the old ones or the present French--or were they merely dazzled by my magnificence? When our pace grew too slow to be borne, I could always drive the coolies on by galloping after them shouting, whereupon they actually ran. But soon they settled down to an almost lazy stroll again, covering hardly half the ground of the incessant dog-trot of the indefatigable Chinese; nor were there by any means as many smiles and [345] childish pleasantries as among those far harder workers and sufferers of many times greater hardships."

68: Mouhot--120-121 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians· Siam
116, 609, 122, 631, 177.63
636.63

"I was again delayed a few days at Korat before I could obtain elephants, in consequence of the absence of the viceroy; but on his return he received me in a friendly manner, and gave me a letter of introduction to the governors of the provinces under his jurisdiction. He likewise furnished me with two elephants for myself and servants, and two others for my baggage; so at last I was able to set out for Chaiapume. Before I started, the Chinese with whom I lodged gave me the following advice: --'Buy a tam-tam, and, wherever you halt, sound it. They will say, "Here is an officer of the king;" robbers will keep aloof, and the authorities will respect you. If this does not answer, the only plan to get rid of all the difficulties which the Laotian officials will be sure to throw in your way is to have a good stick, the longer the better. Try it on the back of any mandarin who makes the least resistance and will not do what you wish. Put all delicacy aside. Laos is not like a country of the whites. Follow my advice, and you will find it good.'

I was, however, much better received on my second visit to Chaiapume, and required neither tam-tam nor cane. The sight of the elephants and the order from the viceroy of Korat made the mandarin as supple as a glove, and he provided me with other elephants for a visit to some ruins existing about 3 leagues north of the town, at the foot of a mountain. The superstitious Laotians say that [121]these ruins contain gold, but that every one who has sought for it has been struck with madness."

68: Mouhot--129-130 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Going north to Pak Lai] I soon found that, but for the letter from the governor of Korat, I should have met everywhere with the same reception as at Chaiapume; however, this missive was very positively worded. Wherever I went, the authorities were ordered to furnish me with elephants, and supply me with all necessary provisions, as if I were a king's envoy. I was much amused to see these petty provincial chiefs executing the orders of my servants, and evidently in dread lest, following the Siamese custom, I should use the stick.

One of my men, to give himself importance, had tied one of these bugbears to the arms which he carried, and the sight of it alone sufficed, with the sound of the tam-tam, to inspire fear, whilst small presents judiciously distributed, and a little money to the cornacs, [HD: elephant drivers] procured me the sympathy of the people.

Most of the villages are situated about a day's journey from one another, but frequently you have to travel for three or four days without seeing a single habitation, [130] and then you have no alternative but to sleep in the jungle."

68: Mouhot--154 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 431, 576, 556, 609

"I am literally pillaged by these petty mandarins and chiefs of villages, [HD: in southern Luang Prabang province] and have to give away guns, sabres, lead, powder, colours, pencils, and even my paper; and then, after having received their presents, they will not put themselves out of their way to do me the smallest service. I would not wish my most deadly foe, if I had one, to undergo all the trouble and persecution of this kind which I have encountered."

68: Mouhot--258-260 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-4
116, 122, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] You will be much surprised on receiving this letter to see it dated from Saraburi, [HD: in Siam] for if you have received the one I wrote in January, you must believe me to be already in Laos. But man proposes, and God disposes. However, to reassure you, I must begin by saying that I am in perfect health, and full of strength and hope. All goes well with me.

I had in fact reached Laos. I arrived at Korat after a tedious and troublesome journey, for I had only a few oxen for my baggage, and was forced to walk myself. From there I went to Chaiapume, and here an animal of the mandarin species made himself great, and under the pretext of having no elephants refused me the means of going further, and was so rude and impolite to me that I determined at once to return and protest against the very insufficient protection which had been granted to me. Indeed, I could do nothing else, not being able to go on. The elephant which had brought me to Chaiapume took me back to Korat, and there I found a mandarin from Bangkok, who had been sent to fetch a white elephant which had been taken in Laos. I begged him to let me join his party, and he lent me two elephants, one for my servant and luggage, and one for myself. I left Phrai at Korat, with the greater part of my possessions, having hired a room for him in the house of a Chinese, and a week afterwards found myself back at Saraburi, in company with this strange divinity (who, by the way, had

more black than white about him), and of the grand personage who had been sent to escort him, and who had showered on him every kind of attention during the journey. He had an escort of fifty foot soldiers and several on horseback. As for me, I wanted for nothing; at every halt the mandarin sent me ducks, fish, fruit, sweetmeats, &c., and he was [259] also kind enough to allow me eight men as night-guards to watch round my fire. In return, I discovered for him in the mountains large quantities of copper, and even gold, which delighted him.

The whole province of Saraburi was in motion to do honour to the white elephant; the King and all his court are coming here; the ministers are here already to watch over him. I decided, therefore, to apply to the Siamese, hoping to obtain more from them than from the Europeans; and yesterday hearing of the arrival of Khrom Luang, the King's brother, I hastened to address myself to him. He, however, had only passed through, and was gone to Prabat, to join the King. However, I found here the man I wanted, the mandarin who has most interest in Laos, and without a letter from whom it would have been difficult to proceed. I did not know him, but I went to him to ask about the Prince, and told him what I wanted. 'I am your man,' said he; 'the Prince can only give an order for me to write a letter, such as I will give you, if you like.' I accepted gladly, and promised him in return my double-barrelled gun, which I could easily replace, 'if

he would only furnish me with the means of travelling through Laos without expense, and would bring the Chaiapume mandarin to reason.' The poor governor of Saraburi was with us, and had to remain more than an hour amidst a number of others kneeling on the bare ground, while I was seated on the mat of the mandarin, by his side, eating sweetmeats and drinking tea, while he dictated a letter in which he called the governor of Chaiapume a fool, and threatened to deprive him of his office, and of this letter I was to be the bearer; and he promised me another general one on the morrow, in which he stated that if I did not receive efficient aid it might bring on a war; [HD: i. e. with France who was then occupying Cochinchina] and this he also repeated to all the chiefs present. My cause was gained, and I could plainly see that our affairs must be going on well in Cochin China; the echo of the cannon had its effect in Siam. However, I had pro-
[260] mised him my gun, and evidently he wished to have it before he gave me the letters This morning, therefore, I took it to him all cleaned and furbished up. He was delighted with it, and gave me at once the letter for Korat and Chaiapume, and to-morrow I am to have one which will carry me all through Laos without any expense but a few ticals to the cornacs: [HD: i: e: elephant drivers] Without this, judging by what I had to pay for an elephant from Korat to Chaiapume, my purse would have been exhausted by the time I reached the north of Laos, and I should not have had the means of returning without

sending to Bangkok to ask for help, which would have been a work of difficulty, and, what is worse, I should have been exposed all along the route to the insolence of these arrogant mandarins. Now, they will all humble themselves before me, taking me for some important personage sent by the Emperor Napoleon or Queen Victoria to collect butterflies, insects, and birds for them. I shall no longer travel on foot, but on elephants, and shall want for nothing. Agree, then, with me, that out of evil comes good, or rather, that God does all for the best. When at Chaiapume I found myself obliged to retrace my steps, after so many fatigues, and so great a waste of money, I was only downcast for a few minutes; God almost immediately inspired me with the idea that all would turn to my advantage, and this persuasion never left me again. Unaccountably to myself, I was gayer on my return than I had been in coming, although then I was everywhere well received and kindly treated by the people. Even after my discourteous reception [HD: by the mandarin] at Chaiapume, all the inhabitants came to see me, to bring me little presents, and to express their regret that they could not aid me from fear of their chief. The head of the monastery took me to see some ruins similar to those in Cambodia, and gave me a tiger-skin; and all along the road I experienced the same kindness, and numbers came to me to ask for advice and various remedies."

68: Mouhot--265-266 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 609, 643, 648

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] During my journey through the forests I enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure I should enjoy on reaching Louang Prabang, the capital of the province of Laos, in writing you good long letters containing all details of my journey; but [266] I reckoned without my host, and it will be several weeks before I can enjoy any repose, or carry my wishes into execution.

In the villages through which I passed no great degree of curiosity was manifested; but here, where the population is greater, I am surrounded by a compact and curious crowd, which extends even to the walls of a pagoda adjoining the caravanserai where I am lodged by the favour of his Majesty the King. Besides, I, in my turn, see people of various nations and tribes who excite my curiosity. Judge, therefore, if it be easy to collect my ideas. However, I profit by the occasion of the king's departure for Bangkok in a few days to pay his tribute, [HD: to the King of Siam] and who has offered to take charge of any letters for me, to give some signs of life to you."

68: Mouhot--268-269 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 123, 576, 609, 646

"No event could have caused more sensation here [HD: in Luang Prabang] than the arrival of 'the long-bearded stranger.' From the humblest to the greatest--for even here are distinctions of rank--every one [269] looks on a 'white' as a natural curiosity, and they are not yet satisfied with looking--nothing is talked of but the stranger. When I pass through the town in my white dress, to go to the market or to visit the pagodas or other interesting places, the people crowd round me, and look after me as long as they can catch a glimpse of me. Everywhere I go complete silence reigns, and I am treated as though I were a sovereign or prince, and the council, by order of the king, have given to me as to them power of life or death over his subjects. Poor people! why can I not raise you from the abasement into which you have fallen?"

68: Mouhot--269 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians

116, 276, 609

"I am overwhelmed with presents of all kinds in return for the slightest favour shown to these unfortunate people. [HD: i. e. the Laotians in the city of Luang Prabang] They seem to me some of the most to be pitied that I have seen; even the women and children are opium-eaters: they might really be called a nation of crétins."

68: Mouhot--272-273 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 644, 556, 609

"[HD: Excerpt from a letter written by Mouhot in Luang Prabang to his brother] After waiting for ten days I have at length been presented to the king with great pomp. The reception room was a shed such as they build in our villages on fête-days , but larger and hung with every possible colour. His Majesty was enthroned at one end of the hall, lazily reclining on a divan, having on his right hand four guards squatting down, and each holding a sabre: behind were the princes all prostrated, and farther off the [273] senators, with their backs to the public and their faces in the dust; then in front of his Majesty was your poor brother, dressed all in white, and seated on a carpet, with teacups, basins, and spittoons in silver placed by his side, contemplating this grotesque scene, and having some trouble to preserve his gravity as he smoked his pipe. The visit cost me a gun for the king and various small presents for the princes, for one cannot travel here without being well furnished with presents for the kings, princes, and mandarins. Luckily it is not here as in Siam; the natives are willing to help me, and for a few inches of brass wire I get a beautiful longicorn or some other insect, and these are brought to me on all sides: thus I have succeeded in largely increasing my collection, but five pieces of red cloth [HD: brought as a trade item] have disappeared already.

The day after my first audience I had another from the second king, who wished also for a present. I sought among my stock, which anywhere else would cause me to be

68: Mouhot--272-273 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 644, 556, 609

taken for a dealer in old stores, and found a magnifying glass and a pair of old-fashioned spectacles with round glasses, which make him look like a gorilla without hair, a little cake of soap (he had great need of it), a bottle of eau-de-cologne, and a bottle of brandy. This last was opened on the spot and duly appreciated. You see all this is expensive, but I am obliged to pay these good people, and the king has been kind to me; and is going to carry my letters for me." [HD: on his trip to Bangkok to pay tribute to the King of Siam]

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

"Notwithstanding the small population of Korat, it is the chief town of a province, or rather an extensive state, containing eleven towns or boroughs, chief towns of districts, and a great number of villages, more or less populated. Fifteen days' [277] journey brings you from Korat to Bassac on the banks of the Mekon, and in the same latitude.

My intention was to proceed northwards, only stopping in the province of Louang Prabang, and then to descend the river as far as Cambodia. I hired elephants, and five days after, having passed through several villages inhabited by the descendants of ancient Siamese colonists who had taken refuge there in time of war, passing continually through forests of resin trees thinly scattered, I arrived at Ban Prang, a village where I discovered a ruined tower, and also the remains of an ancient temple. The next place I arrived at was Chaiapoune, the principal Laotian town in the north, and the chief town of the district. Here also I found ruins; but they were inconsiderable, and seemed more like a Laotian imitation than the work of Khmer Dôme. The inscriptions on the other temples in the province of Korat resemble those of Ongcor: here I found upon a block of broken slate-stone an inscription in Laotian characters, but which is unintelligible even to the inhabitants of the country. These, with some remains of idols and towers at the foot of a mountain in the district, were the only vestiges of that ancient

68: Mouhot--276-277 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 122, 174, 609, 631, 177.63 Siam
636.63

civilization which I discovered in the north. Everything leads me to suppose that here also were the limits which separated the kingdom of Cambodia from that of Vieng Thiane, destroyed during the last war which the Siamese raised against the Western Laotians or white-bellies. It was in this district that I was stopped in my travels by the authorities of the country, who treated me with great rudeness, and who forbade the people to let me have any means of transport, even after seeing my passport. I was therefore obliged to retrace my steps, deploring the expense and loss of time in the best part of the year, and which will cause me serious inconvenience."

What would he have said -- and what would not have been 132
his delight -- if he had reached the smiling capital not in July
when the tropical sun does indeed alternate its hottest rays with
cataracts of the most violent downpours, but in December or
January during the delicious Laotian winter which spreads the
sweet coolness of Mediterranean springtime over an autumnal
decor? He could scarcely have been able, in the course of his /361/
hunts for insects, to grasp /223/ a fugitive vision, between two
tornadoes, of the golden minaret of the Phou-Si, the sacred hill
in the heart of the city, or of the harmonious suburbs all trembling
in their mantles of verdure, or of the flaming twilights on the
misty mountains at whose feet winds the capricious Nam-Khane, a
true river of diamonds by moonlight...

"The city," he explains, "is built on both banks of the river, 361
but the greater number of dwellings are built on the left bank. The
largest part surrounds an isolated peak which is a hundred and some
meters high and at the summit of which a pagoda has been estab-
lished."

On August 5 he was presented "to the princes who govern this 643*
little State and who bear the title of kings." He depicts them
(Tiantha-Koumane and his brother the Oupahat Oun-Kham) with a
dash of bantering irreverence, then immediately acknowledges that
the king is "kind and good" to him (1).

1. "He takes care of my letters. He himself will take them 643*
to Bangkok where he goes, I believe, to take his oath of /648*/
allegiance and vassaldom." "I do not know why," he con-
tinues, "but they display in my behalf all that they are
capable of imagining in the way of pomp and splendor."

He is thus the first to note the dominant character trait of this 609●
kind, open-hearted /224/ and hospitable people. Tiantha- 157
Koumane was certainly ignorant of his guest's capacities and had 643*
no opinion on the naturalist Mouhot, who was still quite unknown
in Europe. It was therefore not the scholar whom he intended to
honor, but simply the stranger and the traveler whose visit was a
happy event for the kingdom, an event which should be celebrated
with great pomp and with general rejoicing. All the Frenchmen
from Pavie down to our own day who have explored the principality
have been given a welcome which has always been just as spontane-
ous and have been received with the same eager and smiling good
grace.

influence of any foreign propaganda and that their revolt did not at any time assume the character of an anti-French manifestation. Thus their uprising had no repercussions on the other ethnic groups in Laos, which in spirit and in deed stood behind our repressive measures. L M 563 669

They returned in peace to their agricultural labors (chiefly the cultivation of poppies) in their precipitous solitudes. A special administrative statute gave them the cantonal and communal autonomy which they desired, with no Laotian or Annamite intermediary. No matter how infrequent their contacts with the populations of the valleys and plains, it is quite certain that racial antagonism (exploited by agitators during the revolt) was maintaining a state of mind among their groupings which was suspicious and devoid of friendliness towards the native authorities. The reforms which were put into effect seem to have yielded good results. In the same way, a prudent policy towards the still unsubdued tribes of Lower Laos, one which will avoid direct conflict with their customs /362/ and prejudices, will gradually tame these last representatives of another age whom the opening-up of means of communication will finally incorporate into the larger Indo-Chinese family. L M 563 636 609 178 563

/ Pages 363-367 contain a Bibliography. Page 368 is blank. Pages 369-375 contain an Alphabetical Index of Names Mentioned. Page 376 is blank. --Translator/ 000

commercial and industrial mission was attached to the former, and it was to study the question of means of communication by land and river, to create trading posts, to collect samples, to examine the commercial methods in use and to determine the nature and value of the products of the Mékong basin. Funds for this mission, which left France with an initial stock of fifteen tons of various kinds of merchandise, were provided by a syndicate which had just been formed, with an initial capital of 100,000 francs, under the name of French Syndicate [12] of Upper Laos. It included representatives of Parisian trade and industry who had united for the experiment thanks to the initiative of M. Léon Tharel, the president of the group.

All throughout 1890 and 1891 the missions fulfilled their tasks with ardor, not without constant struggle against the implicit hostility of the Siamese, which although occasionally concealed under an [Illustration here] affable outward mask nonetheless continued to manifest itself and created obstacles everywhere in the hope of discouraging the valiant explorers and causing their work to fail.

In spite of the difficulties which they encountered, the two missions were successful in their delicate enterprise and the results of the latter were most significant. From that point on we were in possession of precise information concerning the whole region extending from Yunnan to Cambodia.

What was more, by continuing the tradition begun by Mouhot, the [13] Lagrée mission, Harmand, Néïs, etc. we had made contact with the Laotian people and made them know and love the French name. In us they saluted their future liberators and the ones who would come to free them from the brutal and detested Siamese yoke.

Finally--a fact of no less importance--thanks to the activities of the commercial mission, to the trading posts which it had established and to the contacts and arrangements which it had prepared, we were in possession from that time on of private commercial interests in the Mékong basin. Thus greater force was given to the rights which we already had to intervene in Laos against Siamese intrigues in the name of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and the king of Cambodia.

Frightened and surprised by the results which France had achieved in so short a time in the Mékong valley, despite the ambushes which it had laid on all sides and the hostile maneuvers which it had supported, Siam began to fear that France might invade its Laotian territories. It then invoked the friendship of Great Britain and

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Mueng-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phoun), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dieu-Bien-Phu. [609] Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk talliable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current idiom. [561] Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
175 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black
291 Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It
177 was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

619
643 traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion.
[648 The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one
175] or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered
563 that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of which stopped only five years ago).

[726] They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-Ia, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

[108]

APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

563
609 The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race. Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independen

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More in-
433 dustrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements him-
241 self (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for
231 grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

516 The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders com-
417 posed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo